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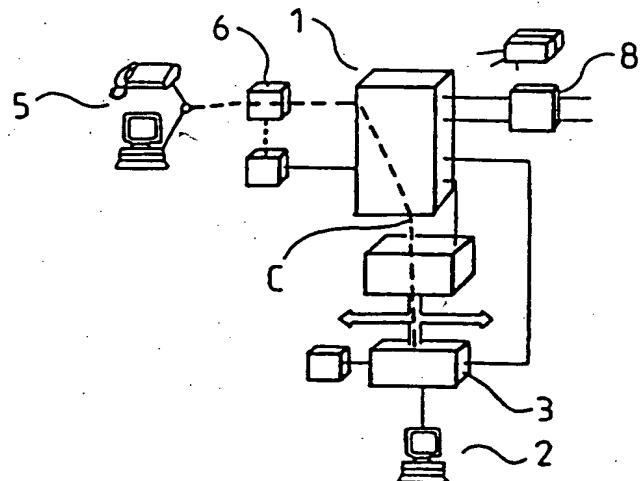
(51) International Patent Classification 5 : <u>H04M 3/42</u>	<u>B1</u>	A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 94/23523
			(43) International Publication Date: 13 October 1994 (13.10.94)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/FI94/00131	(81) Designated States: AT, AU, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, GB, GE, HU, JP, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LK, LU, LV, MG, MN, MW, NL, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SI, SK, TJ, TT, UA, US, UZ, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
(22) International Filing Date: 5 April 1994 (05.04.94)	
(30) Priority Data: 931559 6 April 1993 (06.04.93) FI	
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR CONTROLLING THE OPERATION OF A TELEPHONE EXCHANGE FROM A SUBSCRIBER CONNECTION

(57) Abstract

The invention relates to a method and a system for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange (1) from a subscriber connection. In the invention, a direct communication connection (C) is established between a subscriber connection (5) and a telephone exchange control unit (3); one or more command macros executing a predetermined task with associated parameters are supplied from the subscriber connection to the telephone exchange control unit (3); and the commands of the given command macro are executed in the control unit (3) under the control of the parameters associated with each command.



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Method and system for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange from a subscriber connection

This invention relates to a method and a system
5 for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange
from a subscriber connection.

In the design of digital telephone exchanges,
various teleservices and control capabilities required
by them are becoming increasingly important. Competing
10 operators offer a wide variety of modern teleservices
to tempt customers to their networks. Standardization
authorities have also specified a plurality of ser-
vices that will be standard properties in the tele-
phone exchanges of all manufacturers.

15 Modern teleservices include various capabilities
for manipulating telephone exchange data, which can be
performed by a subscriber connected to the telephone
exchange as subscribed control operations. In such a
case, the subscriber defines the service or changes
20 data associated with the service from his or her own
telephone. The operator of the telephone exchange
thereby has to guarantee that each subscriber has
access only to his or her own data.

Services are also known in which the subscriber
25 of a service consists of a group of subscribers. One
example of such services is the Centrex service, in
which a group of subscribers forms a private branch
exchange (PBX), each of the subscribers being provided
with services normally offered to PBX subscribers.
30 There are also other services in which so-called
virtual networks, i.e. service groups, are formed
within a public exchange. Even in such cases the
customer often also wants to manage his or her own
virtual network. A problem therewith is how to offer a
35 data management connection which gives access to the

subscriber's own virtual network data whereas no other data are available to the subscriber.

Exchange systems normally comprise an operation control interface through which all required changes in data can be made. The operation control interface comprises several hundreds of different commands for managing the data and the operation of the exchange. The command system also comprises verification of access rights, which allows each telephone exchange operator to have individually specified access rights to the different commands. A drawback of the systems presently in use is, however, that the right to use a specific command cannot be confined to certain subscriber connections only. For example, if an operator has been authorized to change the parameters of subscriber services, the same operator has simultaneously been authorized to manipulate the parameters of all the subscribers of the exchange. The present-day systems do not allow distribution of the impact of a command on a virtual network basis, which has prevented extensive offering of control operations that may be performed via subscriber connections. In practice, this type of services are limited to very simple changes made by the subscriber in functions such as speech transfer.

More demanding data manipulation by the subscriber has to be performed by utilizing a front end computer. The subscriber's operator establishes a connection with the front end computer and manipulates data concerning its own virtual network by software designed for the purpose. The front end computer, at simplest a PC or a UNIX-based minicomputer, keeps record of the virtual networks and associated objects. The front end computer then establishes the actual connection with the exchange and executes the required

commands to effect changes.

This invention relates to a method and a system for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange from a subscriber connection, by means of which a telecommunications operator is able to provide subscribers with different access rights to a public operation control interface directly via the subscriber connection without the need of separate front end computers. To achieve this, the method according to the invention is characterized by establishing a direct communication connection between a subscriber connection and a telephone exchange control unit; supplying one or more command macros executing a predetermined task with associated parameters from the subscriber connection to the telephone exchange control unit; and executing the commands of the supplied command macro in the control unit under the control of the parameters associated with each command.

The system according to the invention is characterized in that it comprises a direct communication connection between a subscriber connection and a telephone exchange control unit; a control unit interface program for putting into effect command macros performing predetermined tasks supplied from the subscriber connection; and parameters associated with each command macro, with the aid of which parameters the execution of the commands of a supplied command macro to be executed in the control unit of the subscriber's exchange is controlled.

The implementation of the invention thus comprises an interface program operating between the exchange control unit and the subscriber connection to provide the subscriber with direct access to the standard user interface of the exchange system through

the call routing of the exchange, which means that the interface has a normal subscriber number, to which the subscriber calls. The subscriber is thus, instead of an actual operation control interface to the telephone exchange, given access to the execution of one or more predetermined macrocommands in the exchange control unit. A password that the subscriber gives to access the exchange control system is preferably also used as a keyword for macrocommands available to the subscriber, so that any unauthorized commands are automatically excluded from a session.

The operator offering teleservices is capable of generating macrocommands easily and in a controlled manner. Macros consist of commands of the telephone exchange control unit, which together effect task execution covering the subscriber's connection or virtual network. Pre-specified command parameters written in the macros define not only the subscriber's access rights to the operation control of the telephone exchange but also the objects and facilities the set values of which the subscriber is authorized to change.

The macros are disassembled in the control computer of the telephone exchange into individual commands so that the required command sessions to the target system are embedded sessions for the subscriber.

The operations performed by the subscriber take place through interactive communication. The interface program controls the conversation and switches the required responses (acoustic signals, announcements) to the subscriber at different stages of the conversation by utilizing the call control. For an ISDN subscriber, it is possible to utilize a digital data link and to effect the communication as a normal

terminal connection.

The preferred embodiments of the invention are characterized by what is disclosed in the attached claims.

5 In the following the invention will be described more fully by way of example with reference to the attached drawings, in which

10 Figure 1 shows a digital telephone exchange provided with conventional operation control connections;

Figure 2 shows a digital telephone exchange provided with an operation control connection according to the invention;

15 Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating the principal features of a system according to the invention.

Figure 1 shows a digital telephone exchange 1 provided with conventional operation control connections. The telephone exchange comprises a control

20 and maintenance unit 3 having an operation control connection A. Required changes in data can be performed by a terminal 2 connected to the operation control connection. According to the prior art, the

25 subscriber himself or herself is able to put into effect the required changes by using his or her own computer 4 through a packet network B.

In the case of a front end computer, the subscriber establishes a connection with the front end

30 computer and manipulates matters concerning his or her own virtual network by software designed for the purpose. The front end computer, at its simplest a PC or a UNIX-based minicomputer, keeps record of the virtual networks and associated objects. The front end

35 computer 2 then establishes the actual connection with

the telephone exchange and executes the commands required to effect the changes. Other important components of the telephone exchange 1 shown in Figure 1 include subscriber-specific connections 5, subscriber modules 6, a switching field 7, network terminal equipment 8 and a call control computer 9.

Figure 2 shows the digital telephone exchange of Figure 1 when provided with an operation control connection according to the invention. In the system according to the invention, the normal call control software of the control and maintenance unit 3 is completed by an interface program establishing a direct connection C from the subscriber connection 5 to the control and maintenance unit 3 of the telephone exchange. The interface program generates its own number in the number space of the exchange, to which number the subscriber can call from the subscriber connection in a normal way. This kind of connection can be arranged by normal updating of the analysing and routing data of the telephone exchange. The calling subscriber registers with his or her identity number, on the basis of which his or her access rights to the control unit of the exchange are determined.

Figure 3 is a block diagram illustrating the operation of the system according to the invention. The interface program 10 implementing the method according to the invention controls the interactive communication between the subscriber 5 and the exchange control unit 3. Entering a command session takes place by utilizing an identity number assigned to the subscriber, which also specifies the macro-commands available to the subscriber. Tailored macro-commands 10a are compiled by the telecommunications operator at the same time as the operations to be controlled by the subscriber are agreed on. The macros

contain real exchange commands, depending on the functions to be used with each subscriber. The macros are pre-specified so that the subscriber accesses only his own data or the data of his own virtual network.

5 Accordingly, the execution of the commands of each command macro is controlled at least partly by pre-specified, i.e. fixed parameters, and partly by parameters specified during the session.

Interactive communication with the subscriber 10 proceeds under the control of the interface program 10. By utilizing the call control computer 9, the program is able to switch the required acoustic signals or even announcements in plain text (block 11) at appropriate communication stages. The ISDN subscriber 15 (2B+D) may establish a direct data connection e.g. by a terminal or micro and perform the desired command session by using macros available to him.

The format of the command macro according to the invention, which can be executed by the subscriber, is 20 as follows:

Macro: (par1,par2,..parn;par*1,par*2..par*N), which is as follows when disassembled into separate commands:

command1: (par1,par2,..parn;par*1,par*2,..par*N)
25 command2: (par1,par2,..parn;par*1,par*2,..par*N)

.

commandM: (par1,par2,..parn;par*1,par*2,..par*N)

30 Each command macro comprises pre-specified or fixed parameters par1 - parn, which define the command which the subscriber is allowed to put into effect in the exchange control unit and a predetermined target group of subscriber connections. The pre-specified 35 command parameters par*1 - par*N written in the macros

specify accurately the access rights of the subscriber with regard to the exchange operation control unit and the objects the contents of which the subscriber is allowed to change.

5 An example of a command session put into effect by the subscriber is the switching to be performed by the attendant of a Centrex exchange in order to block calls to service numbers through that exchange. The pre-specified parameters (parx) of the macrocommand
10 that performs the blocking include the number or identity of the Centrex exchange, and the parameters (par*x) to be specified by the subscriber include e.g. the target group of the blocking command (the blocking need not concern all numbers of the exchange), the
15 number combination to be blocked (e.g. 9700), and possibly data specifying the blocking command in some other way. In the example, changes made by the subscriber affect the call control database 9a of Figure
20 3 such that the use of numbers beginning with 9700 is blocked in all or some of the telephones of the Centrex exchange.

It is obvious to one skilled in the art that the different embodiments of the invention are not limited to the examples set forth above but they may vary
25 within the scope of the attached claims.

Claims:

1. Method for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange (1) from a subscriber connection, characterized by
 - establishing a direct communication connection (C) between a subscriber connection (5) and a telephone exchange control unit (3);
 - supplying one or more command macros executing a predetermined task with associated parameters from the subscriber connection to the telephone exchange control unit (3); and
 - executing the commands of the supplied command macro in the control unit (3) under the control of the parameters associated with each command.
2. Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the execution of the commands of each command macro is controlled at least partly by fixed parameters.
3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the execution of the commands of each command macro is controlled at least partly by parameters specified during each session.
4. System for controlling the operation of a telephone exchange (1) from a subscriber connection, characterized in that the system comprises a direct communication connection (C) between a subscriber connection (5) and a telephone exchange control unit (3); a control unit interface program (10) for putting into effect command macros (10a) performing predetermined tasks supplied from the subscriber connection; and parameters associated with each command macro, with the aid of which parameters the execution of the commands of a supplied command macro to be executed in the control unit (3) of the

10

subscriber's exchange is controlled.

5. System according to claim 4, characterized in that each command macro comprises fixed parameters for at least partly controlling the execution of the commands.

10 6. System according to claim 4 or 5, characterized in that each command macro comprises parameters to be specified during each session, the execution of the commands being at least partly controllable by said parameters.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

1

International application No.

PCT/FI 94/00131

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC5: H04M 3/42

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC5: H04M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE, DK, FI, NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DIALOG: CLAIMS, WPI, INSPEC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO, A1, 8502510 (AMERICAN TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY), 6 June 1985 (06.06.85) --- -----	1-6

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

20 June 1994

Date of mailing of the international search report

29 -06- 1994

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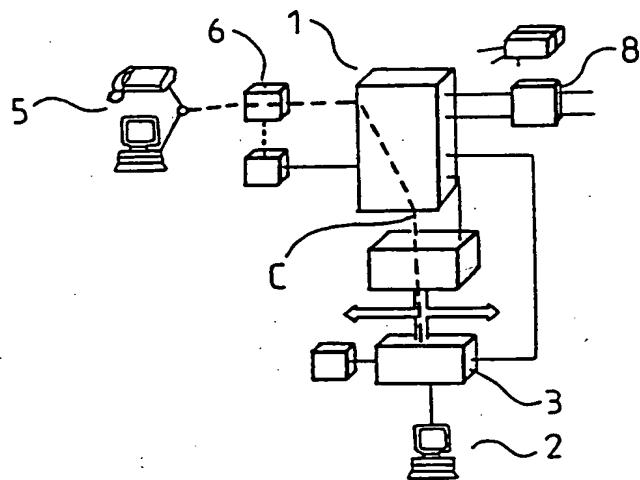
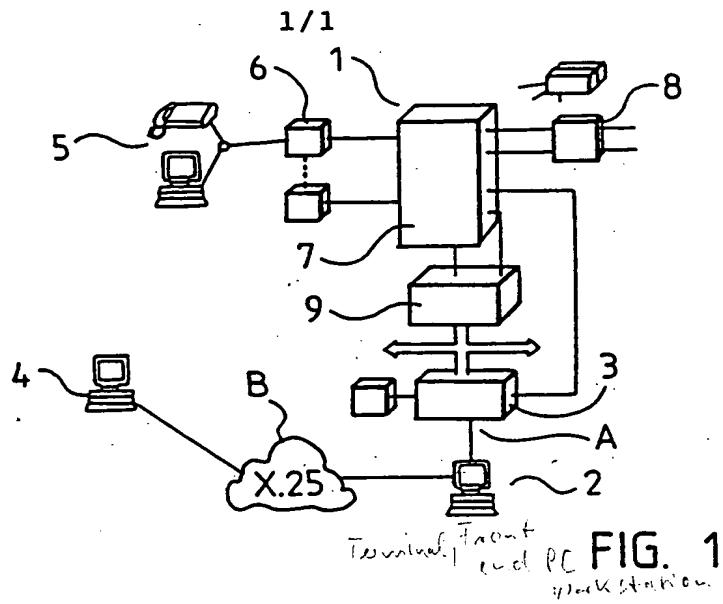


FIG. 2

